

Story 1186 (1990 Tape 5)

Narrator: Unidentified man

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Malatya Province

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Tale taped for ATON by Dr
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The Daughter of the Jasmine Gardener¹

Once there was and once there was not, back when God many creatures but it was a sin to talk too much, there was a man who kept a jasmine garden. This jasmine ^{12, 13, 15, 16, 19, 21 - All} gardener had a wife and one child, a girl who had reached a marriageable age.

This girl took lessons from an ¹⁰⁻¹³ embroidery instructor, but she also used to walk in the jasmine garden every day for exercise. One day the son of the padişah noticed her as he passed the garden ²¹. He thought to himself, "I wonder what this girl would answer if I should speak to her?" Then he called to "Hey, daughter of the jasmine gardener, how many leaves grow on a jasmine bush?"

The girl responded, "O son of the padişah, you can read and write. Answer a similar question for me. How many stars are there in the sky?"

¹This tale is a greatly truncated coalescence of two well-known folktale types. Both types are informed by credible narrative logic, but the character motivation is askew in this mismatched combination of parts of two different stories. See commentary on this problem in the ATON Notes Vol. VI.

hiding
garden
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son of the padişah was annoyed by this clever response. He went home and thought for some time about how he could outwit this girl, but he could not think of a way to do so. On the following day he walked past the garden again and asked the same question: "Hey, daughter of the jasmine gardener, how many leaves are there on a jasmine bush?"

the girl gave the same response she had given the day before: "O son of the padişah, you can read and write. Answer a similar question for me. How many stars are there in the sky?" The boy was upset to think that the son of a padişah was unable to cope with the daughter of a gardener.

When he left the edge of the garden, the son of the padişah consulted several wise old women about some way by which he could outsmart the girl. None of them was able to help him, however, until he accidentally encountered the old woman who was the embroidery teacher of the daughter of the jasmine gardener. He said to her, "Mother, I have had this and that difficulty with that girl. How can I cope with her?"

"I do not know that, but I know a way to bring the two of you together so that you will have the opportunity to talk further with her. But you will have to decide what to say and what to do. Yesterday she was annoyed with her parents because they had not bought more silk thread for her embroidery work.

Get a ball of silk thread. Then change your clothes to those of a peddler and pretend to be selling needles and thread and

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other small items used by women. Walk past the jasmine garden shouting, 'Aktar² is here! Aktar is leaving!' I shall then tell her to buy some silk thread from you."

Following the teacher's directions, the son of the padişah went to the marketplace and bought things to fill a peddler's pack, including a ball of silk thread. When the son of the padişah passed the jasmine garden hawking his wares, the daughter of the gardener sat in deep thought before her empty embroidery frame. She heard the shouting: "Aktar is here! Aktar is leaving!"

girl's teacher said, "Get up, my girl Aktar is leaving! Before he has gone, let us buy from him some silk thread for you

"You do not know what you are saying," answered the girl. "How can I do such a thing? One cannot buy silk thread unless one has enough money to pay for it, and I have no money at all."

"Don't argue with me. He may be willing to exchange some of his silk thread for something other than money. Calling him will give us at least a chance to take a look at his thread." Still unconvinced, the girl called the peddler.

When the peddler came to the door and displayed his goods,

²An aktar is an itinerant seller of herbs, various remedies, notions, and small wares.

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the instructor pointed to a container of silk thread and asked, "How much money would it cost to buy this?"

I don't need money. I come from a distant land where I have plenty of money. I shall sell that silk thread for a couple of kisses."

While this conversation was going on, the daughter of the gardener sat in a corner back away from the door, but she heard everything that was said. "That aktar must be crazy!" she said "How could he sell silk for kisses?"

The girl's teacher said to her, "Even if you had money you might not find silk to buy of such quality as this silk. There is no one here but you and me, and so no one else would know it if you gave him a couple of kisses for this silk." Talking in this way, the old woman persuaded the girl to give the peddler a couple of kisses. The son of the padişah kissed the gardener's daughter on both cheeks and handed her the container of silk.

On the following morning, the prince arose very early-- even before the sun was shining. He went to the jasmine garden and waited until the gardener's daughter appeared there. Then he called to her, "Hey, daughter of the jasmine gardener, how many leaves grow on a jasmine bush?"

"O son of the padişah, you can read and write. Answer a similar question for me. How many stars are there in the sky?"

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"Forget the stars-matars!"³ Tell me instead how you enjoyed the kisses yesterday," answered the son of the padişah.

"Va-a-a-h!"⁴ said the girl and grew confused. To herself she said, "It was the padişah's son and not a peddler who kissed me. He set a trap for me!"

After the son of the padişah had left, she went to the marketplace and bought a large sheep's pelt and sewed on it a number of small bells. She had a tunnel dug from the garden to the outdoor toilet in the palace yard. Taking a brazier of hot coals and two horseshoes with her, she went through the tunnel and just inside the cover of the tunnel by the toilet. When the son of the padişah came out to the toilet in his pajamas at dawn, she sprang up out of the earth, shaking furiously the many bells on her sheepskin clothing. "I am Azrail!"⁵

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³In Turkish if you wish to mock a word, you repeat after it a similar-sounding word prefixed with the letter -m. If, for example, someone's repeated reference to bread (ekmek) becomes annoying, a companion may retort, "Ekmek-mekmek!" The Turkish word for star is yıldız, and the prince mocks it by retorting, "Yıldız-mıldız!" We have rendered it in English star-matar.

⁴A Turkish negative exclamation suggesting disapproval or despair or dumbfoundedness.

⁵Azrail is the angel of death. He is usually pictured as a huge winged creature of unsurpassed strength. In folktales, however, his image is that given here: a figure clad in sheepskin on which there are numerous small bells.

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she said. "I have come for your life!"

"Oh, Azrail, let me kiss your hands and feet. Then let me go and say good-bye to my parents before you take my life."

"No, you may not go quite so easily, for you would not return of your own will. Let me first brand you as mine. Take off your shirt and expose your backside!" She then heated the horseshoes red hot and pressed them against the buttocks of the prince. After he had left, the gardener's daughter retreated through the tunnel, caving in its earthen walls as she went.

The son of the padişah fled, terrified, to the palace and went to his room. There he collapsed into his bed unconscious. He remained in that condition for two days. By then his absence was noticed by the padişah, who asked, "Where is my son?" When no one could answer that question, he ordered his servants, "Search the palace and the palace grounds for him!"

When they found the prince lying unconscious in his room, they reported this to the padişah. A ^{physician} doctor was sent for at once to attend to the prince's condition, and after a short while, he restored the prince to consciousness.

When he had recovered from his fright, the son of the padişah again went to the jasmine garden and called, "Hey, daughter of the jasmine gardener, how many leaves are there on a jasmine bush?"

"O son of the padişah, you can read and write. Answer a similar question for me. How many stars are there in the sky?"

"Stars-matars? Why bother with stars? Tell me instead how you enjoyed the kisses of the peddler."

"But that is not as important as being branded on the buttocks by Azrail!" said the girl.

The son of the padişah said to himself, "That was not really Azrail! It must have been this girl, who had caught me with that trick." He returned home slowly, thinking about the girl. When he reached the palace, he went to his parents and said, "I want to marry the daughter of the jasmine gardener."

Surprised and angered at this, his father said, "If you choose that girl as your wife, we shall disown you! She is only the daughter of a gardener, but you are the son of a padişah.

Regardless of what his parents said, the prince was determined to marry the girl. Going to the treasury, he filled a bag with gold and gave it to the oldest female servant in the palace. He said, "Take this bag to the home of the jasmine gardener and give it to his daughter. Hand it to no one else but that girl!"

The servant took the bag of gold and set off for the home of the jasmine gardener. As she walked along, she thought, "The padişah's son will not see this bag again, and so he will never know if I take a few of these gold coins." Opening the bag, she took two handfuls of gold and then tied the bag shut

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again. When she reached the gardener's house she said to the girl, "Selâmünaleyküm."

"Aleykümselâm."⁶

"The son of the padişah sends you his greetings along with this gift," said the servant, handing the girl the bag of gold. Then, following the prince's directions, she asked the girl some questions in order to find out what she and her parents were like. She asked the girl, "Where is your mother?"

"She has gone to separate one life from another," answered the girl.

"Where is your father?"

"He went to get a house beautifier

"And what are you yourself doing?"

"I am doing nothing but walking from one corner of the house to another.

"What is the meal that is now cooking at the fireplace?"

"It is one above, two below," said the girl.

"Ah-h-h!" said the woman, not understanding a single thing that the girl had said. "Well, good-bye!"

"Give my greetings to the son of the padişah," said the

⁶ Selâmünaleyküm/Aleykümselâm--traditional exchange of greetings between Moslems not well acquainted with each other. It means roughly May peace be unto you/And may peace be unto you too. If Selâmünaleyküm is not responded to, the speaker should be wary of the one so addressed.

*Longer,
Separative
17-19*

girl, "and tell him that the sheep he sent me was lacking its tail."

When the servant woman arrived back at the palace, the son of the padişah was waiting for her. "What did the girl say?" he asked

"Well, after we exchanged greetings, I asked her several questions, as you had instructed me to do, but I could not understand any of her answers. I asked, 'Where is your mother?'

she said, 'She has gone to separate one life from another.'"

The prince said, "Ha-a-a Her mother has gone to deliver a child.

"Then I asked, 'Where is your father?' She answered, 'He to get a house beautifier

"He must have gone to make or buy a broom," said the prince.

"Next I asked, 'And what are you yourself doing?' She responded, 'I am doing nothing but walking from one corner of house to another.'"

"Apparently she is making a carpet," said the son of the padişah.

"Then I asked, 'What is the meal that is now cooking at the fireplace?' She answered, 'It is one above, two below.'"

"Yes, she was cooking beans and chickpeas in the same kettle on the fireplace."

"Then, as I was leaving, the girl sent her greetings to you and said to tell you, 'The sheep you sent me lacked a tail.'"

prince said, "Ha-a-a! She meant that along the way to her home you had taken some gold out of the bag."

son of the padişah then sent a second messenger--a man this time--to the daughter of the jasmine gardener to ask for her hand in marriage. This male servant went to the girl and said, "By the will of Allah, the son of the padişah wishes to marry you."⁷

*formal
effort*

The girl responded, "I am only the daughter of a gardener, while he is the son of a padişah. I am not a suitable bride for him. Tell him to find some other girl who would be more appropriate.

When the messenger returned and reported the girl's answer, the son of the padişah went to see the girl himself. He said to the girl, "I shall never abandon my wish to marry you. I shall continue my efforts to win your hand, even if I should die in the attempt."

"How can you come here and speak to me yourself in such a way? You should have sent your parents to do that!"⁸

"Yes, but since they do not approve of our marriage, I am

⁷The matchmaker (dünür) in Turkey always opens the dialogue with the parents of the prospective bride by claiming that his request is made "with the will of Allah and the consent of the Prophet."

⁸She is speaking for the tradition here. Many people would disapprove of a prospective bridegroom's serving as his own negotiator.

not going to let them interfere with what is really our business."

"Very well, I shall agree to leave your parents out of this matter, and I shall agree to marry you if you will accomplish a task that I shall set for you.

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said the daughter of the jasmine gardener

"Oh, my dear, how could I ever do such a thing? Give up this request!" said the son of the padişah.¹⁰

"No Unless you carry this bundle to the bathhouse on your back, I shall never marry you!" said the girl.

The son of the padişah then made preparations to comply with the girl's demand. He had criers announce that on the following day no one should go to the hamam or travel along street that ran from the jasmine garden to the hamam.

The next day the prince bought a dress for the girl and took it to her home. Besides the new dress, the girl packed a

⁹ A hamam is a public bath. A hamam bundle is usually clothes, clogs, bath dipper, toiletries, and towels all wrapped up in a large square piece of cloth. This bundle is usually called a bohça.

¹⁰ The prince's objection to carrying the bundle is a matter of status. Although he could marry well beneath his class, he found it much more difficult to accept the stigma attached to performing a job that was the work of the most menial of lower-class laborers.

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bath dipper with a hole in it,¹¹ a broken comb, and some ragged towels. These were all rolled together inside a square of cloth to form a bundle

The son of the padişah placed this little bundle upon his back and started out toward the hamam. Along the way, however, the apprentice of a hardware merchant saw him and recognized him. The apprentice shouted loudly, "The son of the padişah is carrying a bundle! The son of the padişah is carrying a bundle!"

The prince was mortified by being exposed in this way, but he continued walking toward the hamam. When he arrived there, he handed it to the daughter of the jasmine gardener, who had come more quickly by a different route. She then entered the hamam to bathe at length.¹² When she had finished bathing,

dressed and went to the front door of the building, where prince stood waiting for her alongside a fine carriage. Entering the carriage, they drove to the palace and were married there. They ate and drank and had all of their wishes fulfilled. May you too have all your wishes fulfilled. *half -tenned derry*

¹¹Old-fashioned Turkish baths had no showers under which one could rinse soap from one's body. This was done by throwing water over the body with a bath dipper. A Turkish bath dipper is a small handleless saucepan.

¹²In the week-long wedding celebrations in a village, the women give the bride what almost amounts to a ritual bath. This may be an echo of that.